

## The Checkered Years: a Bonanza Farm Diary, 1884-1888

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## Book Notices

*The Checkered Years: A Bonanza Farm Diary, 1884-1888*, edited by Mary Boynton Cowdry, introduction by Elizabeth Jameson. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989. xxxvii, 265 pp. Illustrations, map. \$8.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY SARA BROOKS SUNDBERG, TULANE UNIVERSITY

*The Checkered Years: A Bonanza Farm Diary, 1884-88* is the daily, first-hand account of a widow who, along with three of her grown children, lived and worked on a fifteen-hundred-acre commercial wheat farm in Dakota Territory, near present-day Fargo, North Dakota. Mary Dodge Woodward's diary entries reveal daily work routines within seasonal changes on the farm, her impressions of the landscape, weather, and neighbors around her, and strong family relationships.

First published in 1937, Mary Dodge Woodward's diary is uncommon in the literature of western women's history because her experience was uncommon. Bonanza wheat farms in the Red River valley made up an unusual chapter in the history of the agricultural frontier of the Midwest. Mary Dodge Woodward's diary provides valuable information concerning women's roles and activities within the rhythms of farm life in such settings. Moreover, as historian Elizabeth Jameson's new introduction explains, Woodward came west not for land or out of curiosity, but as a widow who accompanied her children. This new edition of Mary Dodge Woodward's diary restores to view an important dimension of western women's experience.

*Louis Sullivan: The Public Papers*, edited by Robert Twombly. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. xxii, 257 pp. Bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA ECKHARDT, IOWA CITY

Louis Sullivan, one of America's most influential architects, was a writer and theorist as well. *The Public Papers* assembles all of his essays, speeches and talks, committee reports, letters to the editor,

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